

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L LILONGWE 000652

SIPDIS

HARARE FOR LTC HAMPTON
GABORONE FOR MAJOR OVERFIELD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2014

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: FORMER DEPUTY COMMANDER BECOMES MILITARY COMMANDER

REF: HARARE ZI 861

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Peter W. Lord, reasons 1.5 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (U) The Office of President and Cabinet (OPC) announced on July 12 that with immediate effect Deputy Commander Lt. General Marko Chiziko will succeed General Joseph Chimbayo as Commander of the Malawi Defense Force (MDF). According to the OPC statement, Chimbayo's contract finished last month, after five years of service as the military's Commander. (Biographical information on Chiziko to follow septel.)

[1](#)2. (SBU) Officials at the MDF told poloff that Chimbayo has decided to retire from military service, rather than take another civilian position in government as previous Commanders have done. Although the change of command took effect immediately, the MDF plans to have an official hand-over ceremony in the coming weeks.

COMMENT

[1](#)3. (C) Chiziko is a seasoned and intelligent officer, and the MDF has profited from his leadership as Deputy Commander over the past five years. Very supportive of the USG's military programs in Malawi, Chiziko was a driving force behind the MDF's participation in ACRI and ACOTA. In addition, he has dedicated a great deal of time and energy to integrating HIV/AIDS care and prevention into the MDF's regular training programs. The USG's close relations with the MDF will strengthen under Chiziko's leadership as Commander.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED. Although Chimbayo's contract may not have been extended because of his lack of overt support for the ruling party during the elections (reftel), the fact that his successor comes from within the ranks demonstrates the MDF's general apolitical stance and professionalism. With the new Deputy Commander yet to be appointed, we anticipate a shuffling of senior positions at the MDF. END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC